

22 October 2021

Dear Parent/Carer,

End of Autumn Term 1 2021

I hope that your son/daughter/ward has had a good first half-term. Of course, it has been vital to be back in the classroom, ensuring that there is a continuity to learning and that staff and student absence has been kept to a minimum. This has largely been achieved thanks in part to the COVID safety measures that we have maintained and to the support from families and the students themselves.

Brief Highlights

Our new Year 7 students have settled really well as they get used to the new environment and to our new routines. At the end of September, our attention turned to opening the school to prospective students for admission in 2022. We had to increase the number of Open Mornings this year to cope with the rise in booked tours. Feedback was excellent, with many visitors commenting on our welcoming and impressive student ambassadors.

Extra-curricular opportunities, a major feature of our school, have returned. Students taking part in The Duke of Edinburgh's Awards Scheme at [Gold](#) and [Silver](#) level have been on successful assessed expeditions in the Brecon Beacons and Isle of Purbeck respectively. The sporting programme has returned with a full weekday and Saturday morning programme. Notable victories include the First XV Rugby team [knocking Orleans out](#) of the National Vase. The Year 10 football team defeated St. Mark's in the Borough League and the senior basketball team earned a well-deserved victory over Lampton School. The Year 7 rugby team have also had their first matches and look to have a promising future ahead. The Badminton club continues to thrive with more participants than ever attending the evening club.

Business students have had the opportunity to engage with industry through a virtual work skills session and we also celebrated European Day of Languages with a series of on-site challenges.

GCSE drama students performed their 'devised' pieces on Thursday evening this week, featuring scripts that the students had written themselves. The assembled audience watched some wonderful individual and group performances to entertain the audience in room 123 (the new drama suite). In addition, the department hosted scriptwriter Alex Williams for a lunchtime inspiration session with Year 9 and 10 students. Finally, live theatre has returned at last with a Sixth Form trip to The Questors Theatre to see Sixth Form student Quinn Goodliffe acting on stage.

COVID-19

The rate of virus transmission is on the rise and whilst we have not had significant cases at school, we need to remain vigilant in order to ensure that students continue to access education. We urge our students to maintain the twice-weekly home testing. After half-term, as we head into winter, students who miss tests will be given the facility to take them at the end of the school day.

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We will host the vaccination programme for students on 4 and 5 November. If you have not yet returned the consent form, please do send it in on the Monday after half-term.

Free School Meals

Parent/carers of students in receipt of a free school meal will be sent a voucher on Saturday 23 October for £15. This can be spent in a supermarket of your choice. Look out for an email from eVouchers. Please check junk/spam if this does not arrive in your inbox.

School Uniform

We have made a minor adjustment to the uniform policy for coats, which is now:

- Plain Coat, if required (no denim/leather/suede; no hoodies/tracksuit or sports tops).

Please note that hoodies are not to be worn on the journey to and from school, nor in school.

Coming Soon

There will be a series of events to support our chosen charities after half-term. Please watch out for details on the school's communication platforms and website. In addition, coming up:

NOVEMBER

Thursday 4 & Friday 5	COVID-19 Vaccinations
Tuesday 9	Sixth Form Open Evening
Thursday 18	Year 11 Parents/Carers Evening
Friday 19	Flu Immunisations
Thursday 25	Students will follow a Friday Timetable
Friday 26	INSET Day
Monday 29	PPA Day (students not in school except by appointment)

DECEMBER

Thursday 2	Year 7 Induction Assembly
Thursday 2 & Friday 3	School Production
Monday 6 - Thursday 16	December Examinations - Years 11 & 13
Tuesday 14	Christmas Concert
Thursday 16	Senior Awards Evening
Friday 17	End of Autumn Term

Thank you for your support during this half-term.

Yours faithfully,



Euan Ferguson
Headteacher